

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 KUWAIT 04040 01 OF 02 151455Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----045383 151459Z /50

O R 151428Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1411
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 KUWAIT 4040

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PINT, LE, IS, SY, KU
SUBJ: LEBANON: NEXT STEPS TO DEFUSE CRISIS

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REF: (A) STATE 174090 (NOTAL), (B) KUWAIT 3937, (C) KUWAIT 3862
(NOTAL)

SUMMARY: IN ATTEMPTING TO REVIEW LEBANESE CRISIS WITH SENIOR
GOK MFA OFFICIAL, I ENCOUNTERED NEAR-CONVICTION THAT USG IS
TOLERATING UNNECESSARY AND HARMFUL SUPPORT BY ISRAELIS FOR
CHRISTIAN MILITIAS. WHILE IT IS CLEAR THAT MFA OFFICIAL AND

USG AGREE ON IMPORTANCE OF SUSTAINING PRESIDENT SARKIS
AND DOING ALL POSSIBLE TO REDUCE IMMEDIATE PROSPECT OF RENEWED
VIOLENCE, GOK PROBABLY TENDS TO BELIEVE SLANDER THAT USG IS
PLAYING AN UNDERHANDED ROLE THERE FOR THE BENEFIT OF ISRAELIS.
END SUMMARY

1. DURING MY CALL ON MFA ACTING UNDER SECRETARY JULY 15 I
ATTEMPTED, IN ACCORDANCE WITH REF A, TO REVIEW THE CURRENT
STATE OF PLAY IN THE LEBANESE CRISIS. I REMINDED ACTING UNDER
SECRETARY OF OUR CONVERSATION ON THE SUBJECT JULY 5 AND SAID
WE WERE PLEASED TO NOTE THAT FOREIGN MINISTER SHAIKH SABAH
AL-AHMAD AL-JABER HAD SHORTLY THEREAFTER DELIVERED MESSAGES
FROM THE AMIR TO BOTH PRESIDENT ASSAD AND PRESIDENT SARKIS.

2. ACTING UNDER SECRETARY INTERRUPTED TO TELL ME THAT THE
FOREIGN MINISTER, WHEN INFORMED OF MY REQUEST FOR KUWAITI GOOD
OFFICES TO HELP RESTRAIN CONFLICTING FORCES IN LEBANON, HAD
ASKED THAT I INFORM PRESIDENT CARTER THAT KUWAITIS WILL DO
ALL THEY CAN TO RESOLVE THE CRISIS. HOWEVER, FOREIGN MINISTER
WANTED US TO KNOW THAT HE FELT STRONGLY THAT WE SHOULD PUT
DIRECT PRESSURE ON THE ISRAELIS TO RESTRAIN THEM FROM DELIVERING
WEAPONS TO "AMERICA'S FRIENDS" IN LEBANON. I INTERJECTED THAT
I HOPED THE EXPRESSION "AMERICA'S FRIENDS" DID NOT INDICATE
HOW THE GOVERNMENT OF KUWAIT PERCEIVES THE CHRISTIAN MILITIA
ORGANIZATIONS WHO HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH ISRAEL. I
EMPHASIZED THAT WE HOLD NO SPECIAL BRIEF FOR THE CHRISTIAN
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MILITIAS AND THAT WE HAVE IN FACT STRENUOUSLY URGED THE ISRAELIS
TO REFRAIN FROM ENCOURAGING THEM. I SAID WE BELIEVED THERE
WAS GOOD EVIDENCE THAT THE ISRAELIS HAD IN FACT LET THE
CHRISTIANS KNOW THAT THE LATTER COULD NOT DEPEND UPON OUTSIDE
SUPPORT IF THEY CONTINUED TO PROVOKE THE ARAB DETERRENT FORCE
IN WHAT HAD LOOKED LIKE EFFORTS TO PRECIPITATE A SHOWDOWN.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----045444 151507Z /50

O R 151428Z JUL 78
FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
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INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
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AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY DOHA
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AMEMBASSY TUNIS
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 KUWAIT 4040

EXDIS

3. IT WAS APPARENT THAT ACTING UNDER SECRETARY THOUGHT I
WAS EITHER MININFORMED OR ATTEMPTING TO DECEIVE HIM. (THE
MORNING PAPERS TODAY HEADLINE ISRAELI RESUPPLY OF WEAPONS TO
THE CHRISTIAN MILITIAS, VIA THE PORT OF JUNIEH, SINCE THE MAJOR
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FIGHTING OF THE FIRST WEEK OF JULY.) HE ASKED ME QUESTIONS
INDICATING FUNDAMENTAL DOUBT OF ISRAELI AND/OR AMERICAN SINCERITY.
I REPLIED THAT I WAS CERTAIN THE ISRAELIS, THOUGH HAVEING MIXED
FEELINGS, HAD INDEED LIMITED THEIR SUPPLIES TO THE CHRISTIANS.
I WENT ON TO SAY THAT IT WAS VERY CLEAR THE ISRAELIS WOULD NOT
TOLERATE A MASSACRE OF THEIR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS BUT THAT OUR
CONTACTS WITH VARIOUS LEADERS IN BEIRUT SEEMED TO INDICATE
THAT ISRAELIS HAD IN FACT TAKEN STEPS TO DISABUSE KEY
CHRISTIANS OF THE NOTION THAT THEY COULD PROVOKE THE SYRIANS
WITH IMPUNITY. I AGAIN (REF B) SPELLED OUT THE FACT
OF CLOSE USG CONSULTATIONS WITH THE SYRIANS AND WITH A BROAD
SPECTRUM OF LEADERS IN LEBANON AND EMPHASIZED OUR SUPPORT FOR
SARKIS AND OUR OPPOSITION TO ANY PARTITION OF LEBANON. I
REPEATED THAT WE ACKNOWLEDGE THE LEGALITY OF THE PRESENCE
OF SYRIAN FORCES IN LEBANON AND BELIEVE THEY HAVE CONTRIBUTED

GREATLY TO THE MAINTENANCE OF THE COUNTRY. THEY SHOULD STAY ON AT THE WILL OF THE GOVERNMENT OF LEBANON. I TOLD THE ACTING UNDER SECRETARY, HOWEVER, THAT I PERSONALLY BELIEVED THE ISRAELIS WOULD REACT VIGOROUSLY IF IT SHOULD APPEAR THAT SYRIA, PERHAPS IN SHEER FRUSTRATION, MOVED TO TAKE OVER LEBANON AS A WHOLE. I THOUGHT THIS MOVE MOST UNLIKELY AND CONTRARY TO THE POLICY OF ALL CONCERNED, INCLUDING THE SYRIANS.

4. THE ACTING UNDER SECRETARY AGREED WITH ME COMPLETELY ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESIDENT SARKIS REMAINING IN OFFICE. IF HE RESIGNED, HE SAID, THERE WOULD BE AN EXPLOSION. IN RESPONSE TO MY EXPOSE OF USG THINKING THAT THE IMMEDIATE NEED IS TO LOWER THE VOLUME OF HEAVY WEAPONRY IN PLAY, IN PARALLEL AS BETWEEN THE CHRISTIANS AND THE PALESTINIANS, HE REITERATED HIS BELIEF THAT THE USG, WHICH HAS SUCH GREAT INFLUENCE WITH SO MANY OF THE PARTIES, COULD HAVE THE MOST EFFECT BY PREVENTING ISRAEL FROM SUPPLYING WEAPONRY TO FORCES IN LEBANON.

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5. THIS DIFFICULT CONVERSATION ENDED WITH ACTING UNDER SECRETARY'S REASSURANCES TO ME THAT KUWAITIS WOULD CONTINUE TO DO ALL THEY COULD TO DEFUSE THE LEBANESE SITUATION, AND A REPETITION OF HIS REQUEST THAT WE DO MORE TO CUT OFF ISRAELI AID TO CHRISTIAN ELEMENTS IN THE COUNTRY.
SUTHERLAND

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